

Lessons Learned from Community Participatory Research with Communities Serving Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Population on Youth Violence Prevention

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ABSTRACT

The University of California, Berkeley Academic Center of Excellence (ACE) on Youth Violence Prevention was funded through the Center on Culture, Immigration and Youth Violence Prevention by CDC in 2005. This ACE, in partnership with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), the University of California at San Francisco, and the East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) is using community based participatory research to conduct a longitudinal evaluation study of the Roosevelt Village Center (RVC) in Oakland, California. RVC serves about 400 immigrant and ethnic minority students, providing an array of after-school and youth development programs. Currently, this evaluation involves EBAYC and other ethnic minority serving organizations in Oakland in the conceptualization of the study hypotheses, identification and development of the various items for survey/questionnaire, development of protocol for data collection, and participant recruitment. Despite certain challenges, the project reflects certain core themes of community participatory research.

SPECIFIC AIMS

1. Examine RVC's effectiveness in:
 - Reducing maladaptive outcomes, and Increasing pro-social outcomes
2. Collaborate with the community in developing research tools, design, analysis, and dissemination plan
3. Develop community capacity to understand and conduct evaluation & research on youth violence

INTRODUCTION

Roosevelt Village Center

- Started in 1996, in response to increased inter-ethnic youth violence (observed by local community in Oakland) & absence of programs for youth between 3 – 6 pm
- Serves mostly **Asian American** and **Latino** immigrants in the Lower San Antonio District of Oakland, CA.
 - 200 students and their parents enrolled annually.
- Opened its first village center at Roosevelt Middle School to facilitate various after-school programs in academics, arts and sports

Partnership

- UC Berkeley, NCCD, EBAYC (and AYPAL)
- EBAYC involved in community mobilization in last 5 yrs (API Center)
- History of trust, understanding, shared values, sharing of information/data

METHOD

- Partnership is Key
- Collaborative Process
 - Communication: Bi-monthly meetings, open discussion
 - Partners involved in all phases of the evaluation (theory, development of instruments, design, sample, recruitment)
- Build on strengths of the partners
 - EBAYC's local knowledge
 - NCCD mediator to UC Berkeley
- Members are equal players. Viewpoints always acknowledged, considered, and respected
- Mutual benefit, mutual co-learning
- Emphasis on the positives & consideration of context
- Generative mindset: Knowledge/data always shared
- Committed to the process, committed to the study
- Stick together despite obstacles, resolve conflicts together
- Foster each other's development, e.g., ACF grant to increase EBAYC's organizational capacity

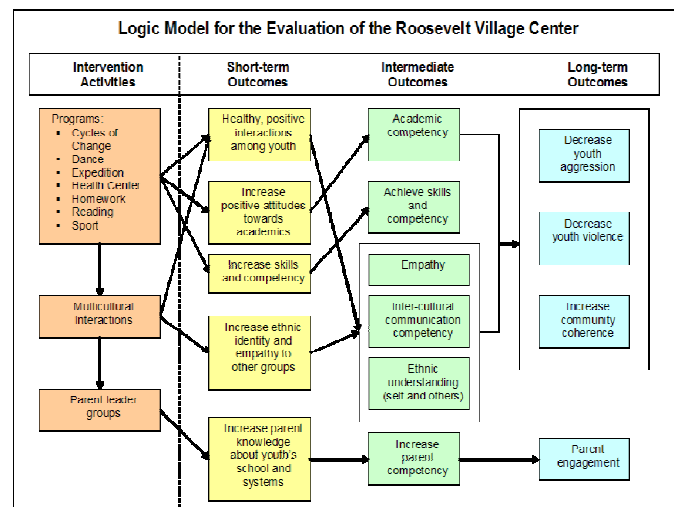
RESULTS

Advantages

- Relevance and use of research by all partners
- Wisdom of group think (build on diverse skills, expertise, knowledge)
- Social capital
 - Mentors
 - Field researchers/local interviewers
 - Collaborators' knowledge of research and interest to pursue advanced degrees
 - Students interest in community-based programs/research
- Sustainability

Challenges

- Not evidenced-based, but a local theory driven model
- Resistance by others
- Process can impact outcome (e.g., reviewing data)
- Real world, real life, real changes
- Difficult and hard to reach population (e.g., language issues, biases)
- Service delivery vs. research goals/priorities
- Person to person relationship vs. organizations to organizations



DISCUSSION

Lessons learned from this collaborative endeavor thus far include:

- Creating an environment for open dialogue and communication is essential
- Creating a balance of incorporating community concerns/suggestions while maintaining scientific rigor and integrity requires can be challenging but not insurmountable
- Providing training and technical assistance in research methodology, and other topics (e.g., adolescent development) to partners is important in strengthening partnership
- Ensuring that community partners are involved through frequent contacts and systematic communication protocol is key
- Seeking to enhance collaborative efforts through other opportunities is important and appreciated. For instance, in line with this effort, NCCD was recently awarded a grant to enhance the community-building capacity of EBAYC as well as the Japanese Community Youth Council in areas of leadership, program development/grant writing, evaluation, and information dissemination.

Community participatory research includes not only engaging with community partners but fully understanding the challenges of community partners, and working with partners to strengthen their efforts and capacities, thereby achieving integration among the organizations.